



# NEP/15

Educational Psychology

Summer 2016

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Edited by David Morris



## Message from the President



The 2016 APA convention is less than two weeks away and my excitement about it is heightened by my knowledge of what's included in the 28 hours of Division 15 programming. There is something for everyone. The Graduate Student Affairs Committee will welcome 16 doctoral students to the Division 15 Graduate Seminar. This seminar provides students

with an intensive mentoring experience and opportunities to network with early career and senior scholars at structured sessions and social events. Similarly, the Committee for Early Career Psychologists will have [opportunities to connect](#) at the conference in sessions designed to address their career stage interests and needs. Members of our Committee for Early Career Psychologists will be participating in an APA-wide poster session for early career psychologists (Saturday at 2 P.M.) and available to meet with individuals interested in joining our division at the APA Division Services Booth throughout the conference.

This year we will celebrate the recipients of our major awards (Pintrich, Snow, and Thorndike) in one 2-hour session (Saturday morning at 10 A.M.). Later that afternoon Karen Harris will give her past presidential address (4 P.M.). We are hosting two socials, one on the first evening of the conference (Thursday from 4-6 P.M.) and another on Saturday (6-8 P.M.) following our business meeting (at 5 P.M.). At the Thursday evening social, we will recognize the contributions of our committee chairs and members and display posters of those nominated for our two *Student Poster Awards*. At our business meeting, we will present the inaugural *Outstanding Article Award from Educational Psychologist* and pay tribute to three scholars who made exceptional contributions to our field and Division 15 throughout their careers: Jerome Bruner, Gavriel Salomon, and Claire Ellen Weinstein. You are welcome to all sessions and

I look forward to seeing you there.

In addition to looking forward to the convention, I am reflecting back on my year as president of Division 15. It truly has been an honor to serve in this role, to get to know the Division's members better, and to gain a better understanding of the inner workings of the Division and APA as an organization. So many individuals and groups have supported me over the year. In particular, I want to thank the members of the Executive Committee (EC) who provide leadership and vision for the Division, and whose guidance has been invaluable to me: Karen Harris, Bonnie Meyer, Ji Hong, Michele Gill, Carol Connor, Tim Curby, Rob Klassen, DeLeon Gray, and Cynthia Hudley. I also want to thank the committee chairs and members (too many to name in this column), whose energy and commitment is what makes Division 15 one of the most vital in all of APA. I want to thank Wade George, our communications director, for supporting me to complete moment-to-moment tasks and activities for the Division and APA, and for keeping members connected throughout the year through our social media, *Weekly Digest*, and, along with Editor David Morris, *NEP*. Finally, I especially want to thank this year's Program Co-Chairs, Michelle Buehl and Helenrose Fives, for their creative design and handling of our most visible event in the year.

This year, the Division voted and approved seven changes to our bylaws, including changing the presidential-line term from 3 to 4 years. This change should facilitate greater distribution of tasks across individuals in the presidential line; increase stability and continuity across activities; and allow incoming presidents to develop, implement, and sustain new initiatives. Also, the Division voted and approved a change in status for the International and Finance Committees from ad hoc to standing. This change recognizes the important work these committees do for the Division. After several years of research, the EC, on advice from the Finance Committee, chose a new investment advisor (TIAA-CREFF) and

### *Message From the President, cont'd.*

strategy with a view to boosting the long-term sustainability and advancement of the Division. Also, working with the Publications Committee and the International Committee, we were able to develop terms and implement two new awards with funds from Taylor & Francis: an *International Student Research Award* and an award for *Outstanding Article from Educational Psychologist*.

My theme this year has been *Bridging Theory and Practice Through Productive Partnerships* and my goal has been to highlight the relevance of our work, as educational psychologists, to the goals and aspirations of educational practitioners and policy makers today. Division 15 is well represented in broad APA initiatives related to this goal. Eric Anderman chairs APA's Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education and Karen Harris continues to represent us in the Consortium for Science-Based Information on Children, Youth and Families, a cross-division collaboration that created a [website resource](#) for "those who care for, or work with, children." At this year's convention the Division 15 program includes two sessions related to my presidential theme: *Bridging Theory and Practice through Productive Partnerships* (Friday, 9 A.M.) and *Bridging Theory and Practice—Teaching Research Methods and Educational Psychology* (Sunday, 8 A.M.). Additionally, two of the four sessions Division 15 is co-sponsoring in [APA's Collaborative Program](#) are on this topic: *Building Bridges Among Research, Practice, and Policy* (Sunday, 8 A.M.) and *Bringing Research to Life—Integrating Science and Practice in Real-World Multicultural Settings* (Sunday, 9 A.M.).

And if you haven't already, please see the thought provoking posts in my *Psychology Today* [blog series](#). Helenrose Fives and Michelle Buehl reflect on James' (1899) notion that psychology is a science and teaching is an art that requires an "intermediary inventive mind" to make programs and methods of instruction useful in practice. Buehl and Fives argue teachers are those intermediary inventive minds. They use their originality to translate our science into practices for their classrooms. What might we learn about our evidence base from them? Paul

Schutz shares what he learned at APA's Psychology in the Public Interest Leadership conference last fall and Sharon Nichols provides a thoughtful response that calls on researchers to be more responsive and pragmatic in our efforts to "give psychology away." Specifically, she calls on researchers to select problems for which our research can highlight useful solutions, problems grounded in pragmatism and local contexts. This is what Michele Gill has done. See her description of the [Galileo School for Gifted Learning](#) for a concrete example of a productive partnership.

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***"My goal has been to highlight the relevance of our work, as educational psychologists, to the goals and aspirations of educational practitioners and policy makers today. Division 15 is well represented in broad APA initiatives related to this goal."***

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Cynthia Coburn and William Penuel (2016) characterize research-practice partnerships in education as long-term, mutualistic relationships that are organized to investigate problems of practice and allow collaborators (e.g., researchers *with* teachers) to engage in iterative cycles of planning, action and reflection. Conceiving of research as partnership may challenge our traditional notions of how to build an evidence base, but I agree with Coburn and Penuel that the appeal of *true* researcher-practitioner partnerships—in which the goals are jointly negotiated and the authority for design and implementation is shared—is in their potential to increase the accessibility of research for practitioners, lead to the development of more usable and sustainable interventions, and build capacity in educational systems to improve teaching and learning.

- Nancy Perry

## Executive Meeting Highlights

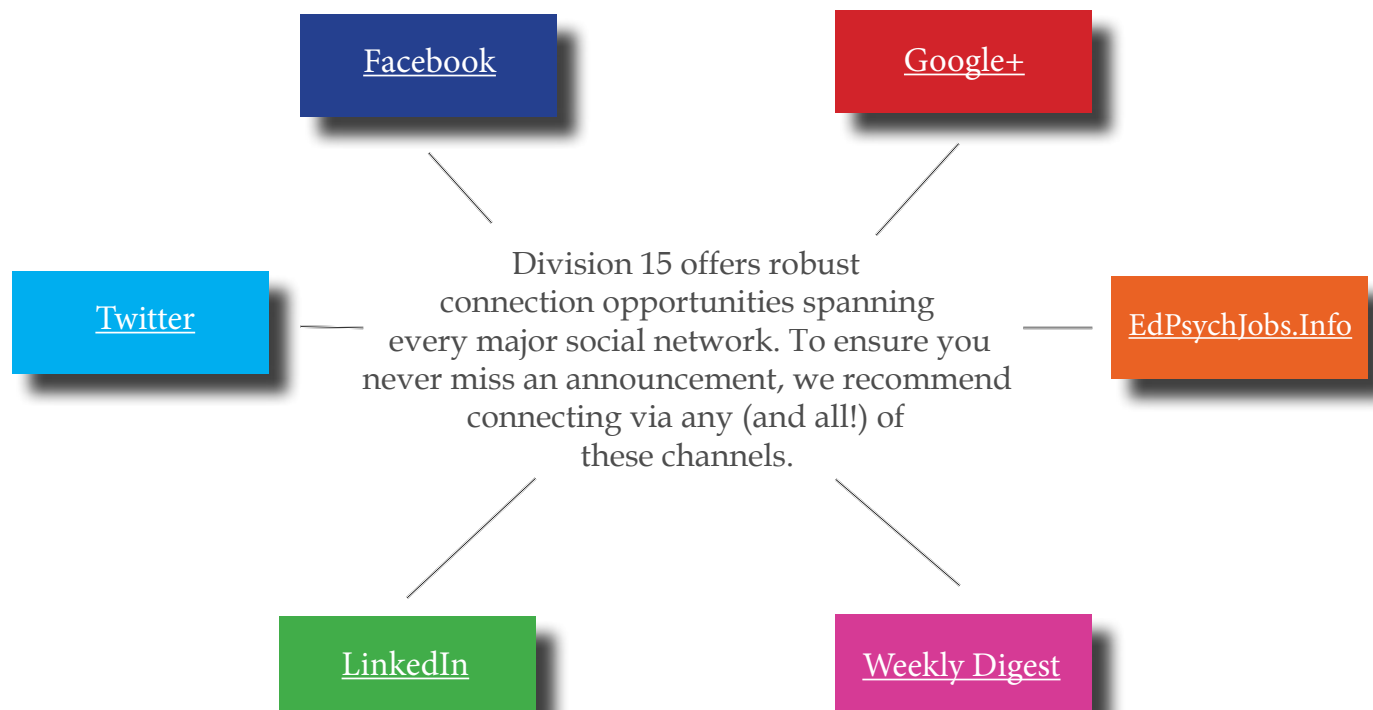
Washington DC  
April, 8, 2016, 1:30 – 4:30

Full minutes may be found [here](#).

- Leaders from several divisions of APA (7, 15, 16, 37, 43, 53, 54) have collaborated to create a website with research-based information for parents and for professionals who work with children. The website, made possible by a grant from CODAPAR, can be found [here](#).
- APA Conference Program updates:
  - All awards will be presented in one 2-hour session, with the last 50 minutes devoted to the Thorndike recipient. Posters nominated for the Graduate Student Poster Award will be displayed at the opening social.
  - In keeping with this year's presidential theme, "Bridging Theory and Practice," two sessions will be offered that focus on (a) productive research-practice partnerships and (b) teaching research and educational psychology.
- The Committee is considering ways to expand the scope and role of the *Newsletter for Educational Psychologists*, including new sections and paid advertisements.
- The compiled committee report can be found [here](#).

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### How Connected are You?





## Convention Highlights & Featured Sessions

Division 15 is pleased to have prepared a strong scientific program for the 2016 APA Convention in Denver, CO (August 4-7). Find more information—including Division 15's full Program Suite—[here](#).

### Thursday, August 4

Social Hour Honoring Committees, Award Winners, & Special Attendees

4:00 PM - 6:50 PM

Hyatt Regency Denver Hotel Centennial Ballroom H

### Friday, August 5

Bridging Theory and Practice Through Productive Partnerships

*Featuring Drs. Michele Gill, Francesca Lopez, and Rayne Sperling*

9:00 AM - 10:50 AM

Convention Center Mile High Ballroom 2C

### Saturday, August 6

Division 15 Award Addresses

*Featuring Drs. Michelene Chi, George Georgiou, and Teomara Rutherford*

10:00 AM - 11:50 AM Convention Center Mile High Ballroom 3B

Presidential Address by Dr. Karen Harris

4:00 PM - 4:50 PM

Sheraton Denver Hotel Plaza Ballroom E

Division 15 Business Meeting

5:00 PM - 5:50 PM

Sheraton Denver Hotel Plaza Ballroom E

Division 15 Social Hour

6:00 PM - 8:50 PM

Sheraton Denver Hotel Plaza Ballroom E

### Sunday, August 7

Bridging Theory and Practice - Teaching Research Methods and Educational Psychology

*Featuring Drs. Angela Miller, Meca Williams-Johnson, Scott Marley, Ji Hong, Lisa Duffin, Aaron S. Richmond, and Stephen Tonks*

9:00 AM - 10:50 AM

Convention Center Room 404

We thank Program Co-Chairs Michelle Buehl and Helenrose Fives for their fantastic work curating these sessions, and we look forward to seeing all of our readers at the event!

#### Help Division 15 Share the Event!

Division 15 requests your assistance in sharing and archiving the convention for those unable to attend. If you would be willing to take a few photos of various sessions and/or social hours—or if you have interest in tweeting about your favorite speakers—please contact Wade George ([wade.george@apadiv15.org](mailto:wade.george@apadiv15.org)) to volunteer! If you plan on tweeting anyway, be sure to tag [@apadivision15](https://twitter.com/apadivision15) and use hashtag [#APA2016](https://twitter.com/APA2016) to extend your reach.

## Getting to Know Our Incoming President



Dr. Bonnie J. F. Meyer is Professor of Educational Psychology at The Pennsylvania State University. She is a fellow in APA Divisions 15, 20, and 3, APS, and AERA. She has served as PI or Co-PI on four NIH grants (1978-1998), five IES grants (2003-2019), and a NFS grant (2015-2018). Her research focuses on reading comprehension

at Grades 4–9 as well as reading comprehension and medical decision-making across the adult lifespan. She was a key developer of Intelligent Tutoring of the Structure Strategy (ITSS), providing upper elementary and middle school students with web-based individualized lessons adapted to learners' online performance in 65+ lessons. In this work, students learn to strategically use expository text structures to improve understanding, thinking, and memory with content area texts and everyday reading. Along with her enjoyment of research and being an educational psychologist, she appreciates her family, including her three grown children, a teacher and writer, a veterinarian, and a computer engineer. She particularly enjoys playing with her favorite learners: three grandchildren ranging in age from 1 month to 3 years old. Across her career she has appreciated her involvement in Division 15, including serving as Editor (1981-84); Treasurer (1997-2000); and member of the Executive Committee (Member-at-Large [1995-97; 2000-2003], Council Representative [1984-88], President-Elect [2015-16]). She values past and present Division 15 members' contributions to educational psychology. As Division 15 President, she will promote strong research, lifespan learning, and mentoring of current and new members and affiliates. Her presidential theme is "W.E.L.C.O.M.E."

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As President of Division 15 for the August 2016 – August 2017 term, I welcome all fellows,

members, and affiliates. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you and our organization this year as President. WELCOME educational psychologists as we:

- W** Wisely wield scientific methods to advance
- E** Education and psychology to promote
- L** Lifespan learning, through
- C** Cultivating research funding and
- O** Openness to ideas, collaborators, methods; we are
- M** Motivated to design, evaluate, replicate, and apply interventions about conative, affective, and cognitive aspects of learning in varying contexts with various learners, grounded in our
- E** Enduring strong history, rooted in Thorndike's love of data and theory, and our commitment to growing colleagues.

I enthusiastically promote seeking and mentoring new members and students and self-identification as educational psychologists for researchers with interests in the intersection of psychology and education, regardless of the name of their current position or department. As educational psychologists, we have excellent analytical skills, research traditions, theories, and creativity to move forward with good research and sound educational applications in K-12 schools and beyond in our communities.

Past leadership in Division 15 has produced a rich history, financial stability, and increased member benefits, such as early career grants, dissertation grants and awards, webinars, weekly electronic updates, *Psychology Today* blogs, and more member participation and outreach. I am excited about supporting, furthering, and extending these efforts with our continuing chairs and committee members and a new group of Division 15 chairs, who have generously agreed to serve for three-year terms starting in August



*Incoming President, cont'd.*

2016. These new APA Division 15 Committee Chairs include Dale Schunk (Fellows Selection), Gale Sinatra (Thorndike Award Selection), Wendy Middlemiss (Early Career Research Grants), April Taylor and David Wakefield (re-appointed for a second three-year term for Dissertation Awards), Eric Anderman (Publication Committee), Ben Heddy as new Co-Chair with Meca Williams-Johnson (Development of Early Career Educational Psychologists Committee), Robert Klassen (International Committee), and Anastasia Kitsantas (Webinar Committee). Additionally, Pui-Wa Lei and Kay Wijekumar are the 2017 Division 15 Program Chairs. The Conference theme is "Welcoming and Advancing Research in Educational Psychology: Impacting Learners, Teachers, and Schools." You will be hearing from Co-Chairs Pui-Wa and Kay about deadlines

and procedures for the APA Convention in Washington, D.C. (August 3-6, 2017).

I look forward to working toward the goals of Division 15 in collaboration with our excellent committees, editors, Director of Communications, and the Executive Committee. Our dedicated Executive Committee includes Past-President Nancy Perry, President-Elect Michael Nussbaum, Secretary Ji Hong, Treasurer Carol Connor (Past-Treasurer Michele Gill & Treasurer-Elect Beverly Faircloth), Members-at-Large Cynthia Hudley, DeLeon Gray, and Robert Klassen, and Representative to APA Council Avi Kaplan. The Executive Committee and I welcome your suggestions, ideas, and/or interest in volunteering for committees or activities (please send such welcomed input to [bjm8@psu.edu](mailto:bjm8@psu.edu) or [president@apadiv15.org](mailto:president@apadiv15.org)).



## Announcements

### Division 15 Welcomes New Leaders

Division 15 is pleased to announce the results of our most recent election:

- President-Elect: E. Michael Nussbaum, PhD
- Treasurer-Elect: Beverly S. Faircloth, PhD
- Representative to APA Council: Avi Kaplan, PhD

We look forward to the leadership and vision of these scholars as they begin three-year terms immediately following the 2016 APA Convention!

### This Year's Award Winners

Committee selections have been made for Division 15's 2016 Award recipients as follows:

**E. L. Thorndike Career Achievement Award**  
Edward Haertel, PhD

**Richard E. Snow Award for Early Contributions**  
Jeffrey Greene, PhD

**Paul R. Pintrich Outstanding Dissertation Award**  
Gregory Trevors, PhD



We congratulate these outstanding scholars for their work, and look forward to hearing their presentations next year at the 2017 APA Convention in Washington, D.C.

### Your Thoughts, Your Newsletter

The *Newsletter for Educational Psychologists* is seeking short (approximately 400 words) thought pieces for a new section titled "Voices in Educational Psychology." Topics for submissions may include notable patterns that emerge from research, strengths and limitations of particular methodological approaches, new directions for research and practice, or concerns facing educational psychologists in the 21st century.

For questions, or to submit a piece, please contact the editor at [dbmorris@smcm.edu](mailto:dbmorris@smcm.edu).

### Read the 2016 Presidential Blog Series

Centered around President Nancy Perry's presidential theme—"Bridging Theory and Practice Through Productive Partnerships"—this special *Psychology Today* series includes authorship from leading scholars such as Helenrose Fives, Michelle M. Buehl, Paul A. Schutz, Sharon L. Nichols, and Michele Gill. The series has been featured prominently throughout *Psychology Today* and has been awarded multiple accolades for its powerful content.

For a complete archive of posts (and more information on President Perry's theme), just click [here](#).



## Interviews With Past Presidents

### Dr. Theresa Thorkildsen

APA Division 15 President, 2013 -2014

*Interview by Persis Driver, Christopher Biltz, and Revathy Kumar*



Dr. Theresa Thorkildsen was the 57th president of the American Psychological Association's (APA) Division 15. She served during 2013-2014, and is a Professor of Education and Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. As part of our past- presidential series, we discussed the events leading to Thorkildsen's presidency, her efforts and accomplishments during the presidency, and her vision for the future of the division and our field.

#### Background and Beginnings

Dr. Thorkildsen's ties to Division 15 can be traced back to her initial membership as a Master's student while attending Purdue University. She credits this early connection to her advisors' insistence that she establish a "stable professional base before wandering far and wide into other organizations." As a psychology student, Division 15 allowed Thorkildsen to focus on educational themes as she cultivated her expertise in social and developmental psychology. Division 15 helped Thorkildsen learn how to navigate the complexity of APA well before she became a full member. Mentored by two past-presidents, Drs. John Feldhusen and William Asher, Thorkildsen strengthened her commitment to educational psychology within and across professional organization. One of the first student-only members of the division, and retaining a division-only status through her earliest years as a professor, Dr. Thorkildsen relied on her now late husband, Dr. John Nicholls, for access to APA's resources. In 1994, Thorkildsen became a full member of APA and persistently served the goals of Division 15 as she was mentored toward

its presidency.

Dr. Thorkildsen's commitment to initiatives that support diversity and civil discourse while mentoring members led to important milestones within the Division: along with the presidency, she was a member of the Fellows Selection Committee and chair of the Thorndike Career Award Committee. Through these experiences, Thorkildsen learned that awards are offered not only to outstanding candidates, but to make important public statements about the values of Division 15 as these take shape in the social and political climates of the day. Both the fellows and Thorndike committees, she stated, serve as important gateways to selecting which national and international messages are projected by Division 15.

#### Reflections on her Presidency

As a developmental scientist, Dr. Thorkildsen made her mission to embrace and enhance the multigenerational nature of Division 15. The Division's longevity and power are inextricably linked to "helping those towards the end of their careers look back and reflect, those in the middle of a career figure out how to respond to the changing times, and those early in their careers confirm their career commitments as they learn how to take initiative." A strong, visible research signature is important for gaining opportunities within Division 15. Yet, the strength of the division lies in the expectation that scholars should take initiative and not passively wait to be chosen for opportunities. Citing her own unconventional trajectory in becoming a fellow, Thorkildsen credited Division 15's acknowledgment of her leadership to her scholarship on moral motivation and professional ingenuity.

Thorkildsen provided a unique perspective on integrating the diversity of age and experience

### *Interview With Past President, cont'd.*

within the Division. She thought it important that the division respect members' families — especially their children. Her own early research endeavors include investigating children's perspectives on fairness of educational practices and institutions. Hence as president she encouraged a multigenerational level of respect for the needs of children in research as well as, when practical, in Division events.

During Thorkildsen's presidential term, she renegotiated the division's primary funding contract, helped find a new editor for *Educational Psychologist*, and generated the documents needed to ensure the financial stability of Division 15. Thorkildsen explained why these were integral to helping Division 15 remain solvent for many years to come. "With combined assets of nearly a million dollars, it was easy to become excited about spending until we considered the details of how to sustain the multiple programs sponsored by Division 15." Thorkildsen and her Executive Committee quickly realized that fiscal security depended on the development of strong spending and investment policies. Aware of the slogan, "no mission without a margin," Thorkildsen led the division through the steps needed to build a strong budget, maintain a required reserve fund, and make progress on building enough of an endowment to ensure fiscal solvency. Most members did not understand that Division 15 is run like a non-profit organization that is independent of its parent organization. In fact, Division 15 pays for services from APA's central offices. Quite different from how other educational organizations are run, APA's structure forces all divisions to remain fiscally independent and is not afraid to close divisions that are not fiscally viable. Currently, Division 15 is heavily dependent on royalties from journals and handbooks, but that revenue easily waxes and wanes depending upon the quality and popularity of Division 15 scholarship. Thorkildsen emphasized the need to find alternative revenue sources of funding, remain flexible during changing times, and think deeply about the Division's sustainability.

Inheriting a commitment to a fall conference from past-presidents, Thorkildsen viewed the

2014 *Advances in Educational Psychology Conference* as an important step in promoting collaboration and mutual support among division members. AEPC proved to be an expensive endeavor, but energized members around common educational issues and psychological themes. Thorkildsen remarked that the viability of such conferences depends on members' level of commitment and investment of time and effort. In addition, she highlighted several other revenue-generating initiatives on the table during her presidency, including support from publishers who were willing to provide innovative publishing opportunities.

A strength of the Division, according to Thorkildsen, has been its exercise of quality control in published work. She explained, "One of the most important reasons why people come to our division expecting good research is that we police ourselves. We say this is really good, and this is really not good. We are not just looking at what's not working; we also try to mentor people into doing things that are of high quality. So, Division 15 offers many professional development activities for people at all levels. As president, for example, I feel like I have been given a developmental task. My challenge was, 'Can I run the show that comes with the presidency, on all the various levels it takes, and still meet the expectations of my university?' We never achieve all our goals: There are always new layers and new professional goals to achieve."

### *Centerpiece of the Presidency*

Reflecting on one of the exciting parts of her presidency, Thorkildsen explained that she was asked to come up with a slogan for her term. The slogan "Achieving More with Others" defined her presidency in several different ways. First, Thorkildsen talked about an intensely collaborative process involving program chairs, Drs. Roseth and Gray. Acknowledging that Division 15 members often did not know one another, despite serving on the same committees, this team also orchestrated "All Committees" meetings, and invited all 111 committee members as well as past-presidents to attend. The goal of this effort was to shake up



### *Interview With Past President, cont'd.*

routines without disrespecting them—especially routines that excluded the real laborers who made committees function well.

Thorkildsen also worked to incorporate a developmental theme more solidly into the character of Division 15. Citing her work on literacy as a lifestyle, she explained that developmental themes are prevalent in all aspects of learning. Yet, Thorkildsen observed that well-being is being sidetracked in the current push for more technology or curriculum driven research. Concerns about people, curriculum, and institutions are each important concepts, but a balance between all three is necessary for educational psychology.

Thorkildsen also reflected on the convergence of memorable events during her presidency. Two scholars she deeply respects, Drs. Graham and Weiner, each achieved career milestones. Dr. Graham, only the sixth female award winner, the first African American, and probably the first women of color, earned the 2013 E. L. Thorndike Career Achievement Award and gave her main address during the 2014 conference. Dr. Weiner, a path- and talent-finder in the field of motivation, earned emeritus status at UCLA and gave an autobiographical address on his intellectual history in which he advised members to celebrate clear professional signatures.

During Thorkildsen's presidency she was most excited about "seeing how our junior talent and early career scholars started things such as webinars and interactive poster sessions, working on new initiatives for APA while respectfully listening to scholarship about their forbearers."

### **Division 15 and the APA**

According to Thorkildsen, communication is at the center of the relationship between Division 15 and the APA Central. While negotiating contracts during her presidency, she worked collaboratively with different constituencies to ensure that everyone was heard. She noted, "In civil discourse, social repair involves hearing all sides, and I try to practice that."

Drafting contracts, Thorkildsen observed ways in which communication within Division 15 has been detrimental. She characterized as "derisive" the mistaken belief that "APA is only interested in clinical (work)." She insisted that instead of spreading that idea, "We need to be a more powerful voice, communicating what we do well rather than shooting down what other people do." In that effort, she and Communications Director Wade George worked hard to "build a media editorial board and start thinking carefully about how we celebrate the work we're doing."

This positive approach to communication within Division 15, and more broadly within the APA, is necessary, according to Thorkildsen. Certain work "can't be accomplished by the Division alone and requires the support of other divisions and our parent organization." The sentiment that a united approach allows us to accomplish far greater things within the larger APA permeated all aspects of Thorkildsen's endeavors.

Thorkildsen also referenced her collaborative perspective when characterizing APA. "Many psychological organizations around the world consider the APA the 'go to' organization." Some see this "go to" status as a problem, but Thorkildsen noted that, "We have an opportunity to develop a larger unified body in psychology." A proverbial "United Nations for psychology" can provide the world with a more comprehensive professional network. The structure of the APA, which is comprised of 54



*Click [here](#) to see Dr. Thorkildsen's presidential address at the 2015 APA Convention*

### *Interview With Past President, cont'd.*

autonomous divisions, allows scholars to practice civil discourse at multiple organizational levels. With practice, the field of psychology can function more comprehensively, tackling problems on local and global scales. The United Nations model is certainly a direction to consider for the future. At present, however, the autonomous coalition that is the APA provides the structural benefits associated with large organizations and comprehensive resources as well as small, specialized groups.

Considering the relationship between Division 15 and APA Central, Thorkildsen remarked on a need for a better articulation of how Division 15 can assist with the goals of APA. She discussed the complexities of Division 15's involvement in one of APA's major committees—the Coalition for Psychology in Schools. Ending optimistically, Thorkildsen described how other organizations, such as AERA, embrace multiple epistemologies and include the arts and humanities alongside STEM and other scientific areas. APA's Division 15 is important because it reminds educators to think about the whole person, advocating for strong, well-defended messages about psychological well-being.

### **Division 15 and the Field of Educational Psychology**

Dr. Thorkildsen characterized educational psychologists as skillful executors of research design, statistics, and multiple methodologies. This strength, in her view, offers educational psychologists a unique, transdisciplinary role that blends existing and original scholarship. "It is challenging to translate existing work, making it comprehensible and interesting for teacher candidates. It is also challenging to pursue new, innovative research interests within the field."

"In addition to translating and producing research, educational psychologists also need to be critical voices of reason when interpreting messages emanating from mass media." According to Dr. Thorkildsen, "[Media outlets] often report factual information that is not grounded in valid data appropriate for the claims being made. We can fill that void by

looking at the rigor of the science [being represented]. As informed consumers and producers of research, I like to think that we set an example for those around us. We ideally display the critical thinking, problem solving, and cooperative interdependence skills that we prize. It is important for us to operationalize our specialized knowledge and skills, and ensure we add value to academia and to those around us."

Asked about educational policy, Thorkildsen emphasized the heart of education. "We care about fostering the development of individuals. We care about the processes by which people learn. We care about making a supportive structure for learning, and we care about things like strong leadership and the intangibles of schooling. Our focus is on the ideas we want to impart and the students we want to teach. To succeed, we need to be collaborative and intentional in our decision-making processes." Thorkildsen used the crab pot metaphor: "I don't know if you realize that if you put crabs in a pot of boiling water, you can keep the lid off because the crabs at the bottom will always try to pull down the crabs about to get out of the pot. So I like to say, Let's not be a crab pot. Let's try to figure out how to use a 'yes and' (thinking strategy) and help people realize that humans are at the heart of education, with all the complexities that entails."

### **Division 15's Future**

Visualizing Division 15's future, Thorkildsen first addressed financial concerns: "I worked to build a 7-year contract so that we have a stable income. I also wanted to set ourselves up so that we could work toward a self-sustaining endowment." She also delved into the concern of shifting membership demographics. "We currently have more members who have lifetime-member status (over 65), than we do active, young members. So, we are working to change that trajectory." Thorkildsen offered a holistic notion of growth. "I see, in 10 years, a growing division that has multiple ways of disseminating essential education research. We will be balancing our commitment to policy for people in diverse environments. If we can pursue that, we're going to be very healthy as a division. People



*Interview With Past President, cont'd.*

really do respect our work and scholarship a great deal, so we have to stay on point."

Thorkildsen's final point about the future of the division highlighted the relationship and shared lineage that passes from experienced scholars to new ones. "Having senior people remind young scholars both that they are part of a strong intellectual history and that there's a lot of need for innovation and nuance is crucial to our well-being. If we can blend those two messages, we're not going to be reproducing ideas that are old and passé. We'll actually be able to innovate with more creativity than if we if we just drop everything that's been done and start over."

*Advice for Future Scholars*

Asked for advice to future scholars, Thorkildsen referenced the changing world of careers in

educational psychology. "Jobs that used to be part of universities are now going to for-profit and not-for-profit companies." She advises students to consider employment in these sectors because standardized testing, curriculum design, and software design have become new businesses existing outside of the university setting. With an increasing number of non-academic opportunities available to new scholars, Thorkildsen advises students to consider a risk-management approach to entering a tenure-driven system. She suggests that new scholars should think about the nature of the daily work they want to do by focusing on the intangibles that come with being a professor, "Professorship is an all-encompassing lifestyle that requires a life-long commitment to innovation and research at a pace that not everyone is ready to sustain."



*Dr. Terri Thorkildsen with Dr. Nancy Perry at the 2015 APA Convention APA in Toronto*